

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release February 5, 1979

Inez Connor 202/343-5634

STATUS OF TWO FOREIGN CROCODILE SPECIES WILL BE REVIEWED

The status of two foreign species of crocodiles will be reviewed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to see if they should be proposed for listing as endangered or threatened, Associate Director Keith M. Schreiner said today.

Public comment and additional data were invited through May 6, 1979, in a notice in the February 5, 1979, Federal Register on the so-called American crocodile outside Florida and also on the salt water crocodile of Southeast Asia. The Florida population of the American crocodile was listed as endangered in September 1975.

The two crocodile species are presently listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The Convention, a 47-nation treaty, regulates international commerce in Appendix II species by requiring export permits from the country of origin. However, new information provided by several organizations indicated that continued legal or illegal hunting for their hides has brought the two crocodile species to the verge of extinction in most of their traditional range. The American crocodile is found in Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, and elsewhere in Central America while the salt water crocodile is found in Southeast Asia, several Pacific islands, and Australia. In some areas, habitat destruction is also a factor in the decline of the crocodile but hunting is the primary threat everywhere.

The notice of review is based on a 1975 petition submitted by Professor Federico Medem of the Faculty of Science of the National University of Colombia, and new information supplied by the New York Zoological Society, the National Resources Defense Council, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and others.

Persons with information that may help in determining whether either species should be listed as endangered or threatened are invited to write the Director (OES), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

X X X

INT 2109-79
BT 10 101 6111111111111111